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Books In Review

Briefly Noted

On The Third Day. By Piers Paul Read. *Random House. 259 pp. $20.*

You can't fault novelist Piers Paul Read for raising some intriguing questions around a fascinating pair of archeological conceits: What *would* happen if a skeleton bearing the marks of torture and crucifixion associated with Jesus of Nazareth were found beneath Jerusalem's Temple Mount–shortly after a hitherto unknown codex of Josephus' *Jewish War* had suggested just such a possibility? How would individuals react? And what about the various theological factions in the Church? Alas, Read gives us caricatured reactions to such hypothetical events, while devoting the bulk of his book to an unremitting attack against Zionism and the current government of Israel. True, it's not so bad as Edward Said. But one expects more in the way of art, and less in the way of polemics, from the author of such fine entertainments as *Alive* and *The Free Frenchman.*

–George Weigel

Between Kant and Kabbalah: An Introduction to Isaac Breurs's Philosophy of Judaism. By Alan L. Mittleman. *SUNY Press. 227 pp. $44.50.*

A fascinating monograph about a little–known modern Jewish thinker. Isaac Breuer (1883–1946), one of the leaders of the strictest segment of German Orthodox Judaism, emigrated to Palestine in 1936. Although not a rabbi, he was thoroughly educated in the classical Jewish sources, as well as in philosophy and law. Although deeplyopposed to secular Zionism, and even to religious Zionism because of what he perceived to be its too–easy acceptance of secularism in Jewish life, Breuer was committed to the rebuilding of the Jewish homeland in the land of Israel, where he hoped a "Torah state," governed and guided by Jewish law and tradition in the fullest sense, would eventually emerge. Mittleman places Breuer in both Jewish and European history, and shows that even though many of Breuer's ideas seem "deeply flawed," he nevertheless is important for those concerned with the moral and spiritual implications of Jewish "sacred nationhood" after 1948 (and 1967).

–David Novak

Interpreting Maimonides: Studies In Methodology, Metaphysics, and Moral Philosophy. By Marvin Fox. *University of Chicago Press. 356 pp. $27.*

As modern Thomists attempt to reappropriate the philosophy of Aquinas, some contemporary Jewish thinkers are attempting the same thing with the philosophy of Moses Maimonides. Professor Marvin Fox of Brandeis, foremost among them, has over the past twenty–five years published normative essays on Maimonides. His 1972 essay on "Maimonides and Aquinas on Natural Law," in which he argues against imputing any natural law theory to Maimonides, generated particular debate. In the present collection, Fox offers a coherent picture of his view of Maimonides, arguing against both natural law adherents and Kantians, who, he believes, make Maimonides too much of a rationalist. Fox may be seen as the mirror image of the late Leo Strauss (frequently mentioned in the book), who employed Maimonides in his attempt to separate revelation from reason for the sake of reason. Fox attempts to do the same thing for the sake of revelation. It is an important dispute, about which this book is essential reading.

–D. N.

We the People: Foundations. By Bruce Ackerman. *Harvard University Press. 369 pp. $24.95.*

The author, Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale, acknowledges that in recent years there have been many criticisms of expansive government and judicial activism, but he boasts that he has not been influenced by them. In fact, it is not evident that he has read them. This brief for what used to be called "participatory democracy" ends with the proposal that we need a new Bill of Rights that would, among other things, "secure each citizen against the vagaries of unemployment, disability, sickness, and old age." Further, once adopted, Ackerman proposes that his Bill of Rights should be unamendable. "This is not the place to go into details," he modestly adds on page 319.

Approaches to Peace: An Intellectual Map. By W. Scott Thompson et al. *United States Institute of Peace. 412 pp. $29.95 paper.*

Sixteen essays on what peace means and how to attain it, ranging from unabashed *Realpolitik* to sundry "conflict resolution" and pacifist proposals. Among the contributors: Max Kampelman, Herbert Kelman, Geoffrey Kemp, Edward Luttwak, and Robert Pickus.

Despite All Odds: The Story of Lubavitch. By Edward Hoffman. *Simon and Schuster. 223 pp. $19.95.*

A popular and admiring account of the Lubavitcher movement,with a strong focus on its charismatic leader, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson.

A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering In a Divided Society. By Donald L. Horowitz. *University of California Press. 293 pp. $24.95.*

A Duke University law professor offers suggestive proposals for following up on the dismantling of apartheid. Required and sobering stuff for people interested in the future of that riven country.

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